United Nations E/CN.4/2002/136-E/CN.6/2002/8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 February 2002

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-sixth session
4-15 March 2002
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system

Commission on Human Rights
Fifty-eighth session
18 March-26 April 2002
Item 12 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective: violence against women

Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Commission on the Status of Women the report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995.

* E/CN.6/2002/1.
** E/CN.4/2002/1.

02-25189 (E) 210202

I. Introduction

1. General Assembly resolution 50/166 mandated the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to strengthen its activities to eliminate violence against women in order to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. In doing so, UNIFEM was to work closely with the relevant agencies and bodies of the United Nations as part of its system-wide efforts to eliminate violence against women. Under the guidance of that resolution, the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women was established in 1996 and became operational in 1997. Since then, it has continued to identify and support innovative and catalytic projects around the world that aim to break new ground, create new models, and/or mobilize new constituencies in the growing movement to eradicate gender-based violence in all its manifestations.

2. The present report to the forty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights documents the activities undertaken by UNIFEM during 2001 to eliminate violence against women.

II. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

3. The Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women provides grants for new, innovative strategies and best practices both from within UNIFEM and in an inter-agency context. Lessons learned from the experience of the Trust Fund are studied by national, regional and global programmes, which the UNIFEM field network and its partners use in devising longer-term, high-impact strategies to eliminate violence against women, often working with civil society organizations, Governments and United Nations partners.

4. Since the beginning of its operations in 1996, the Trust Fund has awarded $6.8 million in grants to 129 initiatives, supporting local, national, regional and global actions to eliminate violence against women in over 73 countries. Over the past three years, the Trust Fund has experienced an unprecedented increase in grant applications from 136 in 1999 to more than 325 proposals, with requests totalling over $17.5 million in 2001. This expansion can partly be explained by the Fund's greater visibility and growing community of grantees, but it also points to its unique standing as a specific multilateral funding mechanism in a development context in which gender-based violence continues to pose a major threat to women's well-being. Furthermore, it suggests the existence of a dynamic constituency engaged in a myriad of initiatives at the national level following the recommendations outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action and its five-year review.

A. Trust Fund grant-making activities

5. In 2001, the Trust Fund's two main operational elements, namely its grant-making activities and its learning component, were significantly strengthened to support UNIFEM's organization-wide strategy to eliminate violence against women. In response to the increase in grant applications mentioned earlier, the Trust Fund placed renewed emphasis on streamlining its operational procedures. New guidelines to strengthen field involvement in proposal selection were developed, allowing UNIFEM to strengthen its role of providing technical assistance for the development of proposals, as well as its monitoring and evaluation functions.

6. During the 2001 grant cycle, the Trust Fund allocated more than $1 million. The inter-agency Project Appraisal Committee, which is responsible for the final selection of proposals at Headquarters, met in July 2001. The Committee included representatives from the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A representative of a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in the area of women's human rights was also invited. The grants approved by the Committee were allocated to 21 initiatives worldwide. The initiatives will address diverse forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation and female servitude. Grantees will apply strategies ranging from public awareness raising and education, to advocacy,

legal literacy, training for professionals, service provision and training of women's groups, including:

(a) In the Kyrgyz Republic, an NGO will work to strengthen community councils in order to develop preventive measures and mechanisms to respond to domestic violence. The project will bring together representatives from non-governmental and community organizations, local authorities and informal leaders in order to develop a common approach to the prevention of gender-based violence;

(b) A project in Thailand will review existing provisions in the criminal code regarding marital rape and child pornography and will propose amendments to the penal code to address forms of sexual violence that currently fall outside existing legislation. The review will be followed by advocacy and lobbying activities;

(c) Initiatives in Colombia and Ecuador will seek to build the capacity of government officials to develop effective collaboration strategies between themselves and immigration authorities in order to address trafficking in women and girls;

(d) In Ghana, NGOs will advocate for the enforcement of a law banning female ritual servitude through community education and the establishment of monitoring councils.

B. Trust Fund grants for media and communications strategies

7. The growing interest in the use of new innovative strategies to address gender-based violence propelled UNIFEM to issue a special call for proposals focusing on the use of media and communications strategies in the elimination of violence against women. This second grant-making cycle in 2001 was made possible through the support of the United Nations Foundation. Five organizations were awarded grants ranging from $50,000 to $100,000. The proposals, selected from more than 250 submissions, were chosen based on their innovative approach, their ability to reach new constituencies and build sustainable partnerships with media and communications professionals and their potential to effect changes in attitudes and behaviour.

8. Interim reports show that projects are successfully harnessing the power of mainstream media to reach new and expanded constituencies:

(a) A soap opera produced in Nicaragua was rated one of the most popular television programmes in the country, especially among teenagers. Focus groups with young viewers confirmed that the programme's clear message was beginning to translate into growing awareness among teenagers of their rights to make their own decisions and confront discrimination;

(b) In India, an organization working on the development of resources for human rights education through mainstream media produced a music video focusing on violence against women and its impact on women's livelihoods. The video developed a strong, empowering message for women, gaining enormous popularity and reaching millions of people. It was picked up for distribution by a major media conglomerate and was released during the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance which was held in South Africa in 2001.

C. Trust Fund learning component

9. Established in 1998 with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the learning component has allowed the Trust Fund to complement its grant-making activities by adding a focus on review and analysis of lessons learned from Trust Fund-supported initiatives worldwide. Following the publication of *With an End in Sight: Strategies from the UNIFEM Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence against Women*, the learning component focused in 2001 on capacity-building, with the implementation of a series of regional strategic communications workshops for Trust Fund grantees and UNIFEM field staff.

10. The regional strategic communications workshops took place in Zimbabwe, Nepal, Mexico and Slovakia. In all, 200 participants shared strategies for crafting and disseminating advocacy messages, identifying effective media tools and expertise in their regions and organizing low-cost focus groups. Participants developed specific and action-oriented communications strategies, incorporating lessons and skills learned in the workshops. As immediate follow-up to the workshops, UNIFEM set up a web site where workshop participants continue to share resource materials, progress on implementing strategies and offer each other advice and ideas. Participants have also replicated the workshop methodology and materials — a grantee from South Africa collaborated

with a network of South African NGOs in the production of a resource manual on strategic communications strategies to end violence against women.

11. In addition, UNIFEM partnered with the Media/Materials Clearinghouse at Johns Hopkins University to develop a catalogue and database of media and communications resources on violence against women. The catalogue, *Picturing a Life Free of Violence*, provides organizations with direct access to a wide range of communications materials and allows activists to download materials from the Internet at no cost and to adapt these tools to their culture and country-specific contexts. While organizations can already access many of these media materials online, the catalogue and database highlight useful and effective materials and strategies and serve as a centralized resource centre for future UNIFEM publications and materials.

12. Selected results from recently completed Trust Fund projects include:

(a) A project in the United Republic of Tanzania that encouraged the participation of law enforcement officers from two local districts in the design of training manuals on gender issues in justice provision resulted in a pledge made by the local authorities to enforce national legislation ensuring women's full protection from domestic violence;

(b) A study conducted by a project in Mongolia provided first-time data on district court decisions on domestic violence. The results of the study generated strong interest from both law enforcement authorities and the country's legislature and will provide important information for the drafting of new laws on domestic violence. In China, UNIFEM support for a public campaign to eliminate violence against women resulted in the establishment of a national coordination group for the protection of women's and children's rights by the Government. This institutional mechanism will be replicated in four provinces through a project supported by the UNIFEM Trust Fund;

(c) The Governments of some of the main state capital cities in Brazil have created an inter-sectoral network of community and governmental services as a result of their participation in a project aimed at strengthening municipal-level initiatives to end violence against women;

(d) Interviews with students comparing their attitudes before and after a training on sexual harassment organized by a project in Croatia showed a significant increase in participants' willingness to discuss and actively address the issue of sexual abuse in their academic environment.

D. End Violence Working Group II

13. The End Violence electronic working group was relaunched on 25 November 2001, the International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women. This discussion list had previously proved highly successful as a forum for the exchange of information on strategies, best practices, policies and programmes addressing violence against women. End Violence II will run for six months. During this period an electronic gateway on violence against women will be developed.

III. Programmes to eliminate violence against women carried out by the United Nations Development Fund for Women

14. In addition to Trust Fund grants, UNIFEM has allocated more than $12 million over the past four years to support additional programming for the elimination of violence against women. While the Trust Fund has primarily supported NGO-executed initiatives, UNIFEM has also carried out its own programmes focusing on regional activities. These larger-scale initiatives to end gender-based violence have brought in new donors, United Nations partners and Governments and have generated new opportunities for learning and leveraging additional funds.

15. For example, in 2001, UNIFEM launched a regional advocacy campaign to end violence against women in eight countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Lithuania. Building on lessons learned from UNIFEM's 1998-1999 inter-agency campaigns in Latin America, Africa and the Asia Pacific region, the campaign strategy in the Commonwealth of Independent States was developed jointly by all partners. Results from regional research conducted on attitudes towards domestic violence and representation of women in the media will help to

refine the Campaign's communications and advocacy strategy.

16. During the past year, the important advocacy work started during the 1998-1999 inter-agency campaigns to end violence against women has entered into a new phase, permeating government activities and expanding outreach and linkages to other areas of work. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW) and a wide range of NGOs convened a regional symposium in Mexico on "Gender Violence, Health and Human Rights in the Americas". The event brought together high-level government officials, policymakers, NGO advocates and specialists from international agencies and showcased initiatives in the areas of policy and legislation, programme intervention and advocacy. The symposium aimed at strengthening an integrated vision to promote and mobilize specific strategies to support initiatives that address violence against women as a public health and human rights issue. A final call to action urged Governments, civil society, the media and organizations of the inter-American system and the United Nations to implement their human rights obligations and commitments to eradicate gender-based violence.

IV. Assessment of the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the elimination of violence against women

17. A comprehensive assessment of UNIFEM's work on the elimination of violence against women is currently underway. This assessment involves both UNIFEM's regional offices as well as headquarters. The review will build broad-based understanding among UNIFEM and its partners about the value of different strategies, the impact of emerging issues and possible avenues for coordinated action in ending violence against women. While generating baseline and analytical information that will contribute to improve indicators to measure progress on ending gender-based violence, it is anticipated that the recommendations from this exercise will also assist the organization in further sharpening the strategic focus of its programme. This in turn will strengthen the effectiveness of UNIFEM programme interventions and cast a new light on potential new partnerships for the elimination of violence against women.

V. Conclusion

18. In the spirit of General Assembly resolution 50/166, UNIFEM will continue to identify and support innovative local, national, regional and international initiatives. The recommendations that will come out of the ongoing assessment will strengthen UNIFEM's future strategies and improve its relationship with Governments, NGOs and donors.